

Why Should We Sing Psalms?

Should today's Christians sing psalms in public worship? For a long time – about eighteen hundred years – that question would not have been relevant. Throughout those years Christians of all kinds used psalms in worship. Some chanted them as prose texts in Greek or Latin, and some sang them in metrical versions (the Hebrew psalms rendered into lyrical poetry according to the forms of a given language and set to tunes suitable for congregational use). The situation began to change in the late eighteenth century, and since then psalm singing or psalmody has almost disappeared in many groups of English-speaking Christians. The last few decades, however, have experienced a revival of interest in psalmody in many quarters.

With many resources available to us, it is good to consider the basic questions addressed in this booklet: Should we sing psalms today? Why should we sing them? Perhaps the real question is why did English-speaking Christians ever give up singing psalms? Why don't we sing them? But it is always better to look at things in a positive light, so we shall proceed to answer the question as stated in a number of ways.

The Biblical Basis for Singing the Psalms

We who uphold the absolute authority of God's Word should be directed by Scripture in all that we do. This is especially true of public worship, for there we must offer to God what pleases Him. Out of reverence for His holiness (Lev. 10:3), we must worship God as He has commanded in His Word. Let me present three reasons from the Bible why we should sing psalms.